

**FIRST 5 CALIFORNIA CHILDREN AND FAMILIES COMMISSION (CCFC)
SCHOOL READINESS (SR) PROGRAM**

**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs) &
FISCAL REPORTING PROCESS
(Consolidated Version, July 2004)**

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GLOSSARY

AAP	American Academy of Pediatrics
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
API	Academic Performance Index
CBO	Community Based Organization
CCAFA	California Children and Families Association
First 5 CCFC	First 5 California Children and Families Commission
CCPC	Child Care Planning Council
ECE	Early Care and Education
ELL	English Language Learners
FY	Fiscal Year
IASA	Improving America's Schools Act
IDEA	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
LEA	Local Education Agencies
LEP	Limited English Proficient
NEGP	National Education Goals Panel
RFF	Request for Funding
SR	School Readiness
SRPO	School Readiness Partnership Office (First 5 CCFC)
STAR	Standardized Testing and Reporting
State Fiscal Year	July 1 through June 30
TA	Technical Assistance
TANF	Temporary Assistance to Needy Families

SECTION 1: PROGRAM OPERATIONS

COUNTY COMMISSION & LOCAL MATCHING FUNDS

1. Q: Will a county match be required? How much?

A: A cash match of \$1 of new local funds for every \$1 of State funds is required. The match is required for each fiscal year and for each SR Program. (7/2/02)

2. Q: Does the county match have to be made up of Local First 5 Funds?

A: No. The local match can come from any source as long as it is a real cash contribution. No in-kind services of any kind will be allowed as part of local match. (See page 18 of the of the Guidelines and Tools for Completing a School Readiness Program Application.) (8/22/01)

3. Q: Can First 5 County Commission Funds already committed to a School Readiness Program be used as all or part of the county match? If we have a countywide project, can we count a percentage of those funds budgeted toward School Readiness communities as a match?

A: Yes. First 5 County Commission funds already committed or obligated during the current year may be applied as part or all of the county match. County Commission funds committed to projects that will become part of your School Readiness Program during the current fiscal year may be counted as local match. Funds committed to programs, or parts of programs, not included in School Readiness Programs cannot be considered as “match.” FIRST 5 CCFC funds may be used to expand an existing or previously planned program that is consistent with the initiative and is included as part of the county’s application. (8/22/01)

4. Q: Define “Local Partners” Funds. For instance, can State Child Care and Development Funds (CDE General Child Care and Development) be used as match?

A: “Local partners” may be any public or private agency or group that is committing resources to the planning, development, implementation, and sustaining of local School Readiness Programs. (Please see page 18 of the SR RFF Guidelines.) Potentially, new government funds (county, local/city, state, or federal) committed to School Readiness Programs in an approved application may be considered as “match.” (9/12/01)

5. Q: If we are matching any of the First 5 CCFC matching funds programs such as the Compensation Retention Incentives (CRI) requirements, could the county use the same local match as match for the School Readiness Initiative?

A: No. The local match for Compensation Retention Incentive (CRI) funding cannot be applied to the County Commission’s School Readiness Program. The State Prop.10 funds awarded for CRI also cannot be applied as match. Moreover, any State First 5 CCFC funds received from

any other First 5 CCFC initiative also cannot be used as cash match. Please note: This fiscal policy has been updated to align with CRI policy. Double matching does not support the intent of the First 5 CCFC matching funds initiatives. (7/04)

6. **Q: Can State First 5 CCFC Funds received by a county commission for another project that complements the local SR program be used as local match?**

A: No. State First 5 CCFC funds cannot be used as local match. (5/20/03)

7. **Q: Can a percentage of an existing position with newly assigned School Readiness duties be considered local cash match? For example, 15% of the Special Education Administrator's time will be dedicated to SR, and the county would like to consider 15% of the salary as match. (Existing position is defined as a position currently in place at a specified salary and time base.)**

A: No. A percentage of an existing position is not considered as local cash match for the First 5 California School Readiness Matching Funds because staff positions are considered to be "in kind" contributions. Please note that in-kind contributions are defined as facilities, supplies, services, etc., that are not provided by a "cash disbursement" (SR RFF Guidelines, page 18). *All cash match must be clearly traceable and auditable and demonstrate a new/expanded/enhanced level of services for children 0-5 in the 5 "Essential and Coordinated Elements" of the SR Program.*

However, a new or expanded position funded with dollars that are traceable and auditable to the School Readiness Program can be counted as cash match. There must be a clear trail for the exchange of funds between partners (e.g., MOU with local partners that clearly specifies the new funds). Please note that acceptable sources of local cash match include "new expenditures by school districts and local public agencies in excess of existing local investments..." (SR RFF Guidelines, page 18).

Of course, all partner contributions are valuable and are important to developing and sustaining SR Programs. In-kind contributions can be included in the total investment in School Readiness **over** the required \$1: \$1 cash match. For further information on local cash match, please refer to SR RFF page 18.

NOTE: To avoid supplantation, First 5 CCFC funds "shall not be used to fund any levels of service that were or are currently in existence at the time of the purported expenditure." For further information on supplantation, please refer to the Attorney General's opinion titled, Attorney General Opinion on Supplementation vs. Supplantation, posted on the First 5 CCFC website under *Annual Reports and Fiscal Issues*. (6/25/03)

8. **Q: Is it acceptable for a county commission to amortize or prorate a capital expenditure such as the cost of a School Readiness or preschool facility or land purchase over a 4-year funding period for the School Readiness Program? For example, a local partner purchases land for a preschool site and pays the total cost of the land purchase at one time to avoid interest charges.**

A: Yes. Since the First 5 CCFC is unable to fund capital expenditures such as a facility or land purchase, it is acceptable for County Commissions to use capital expenditures as local cash match and to prorate the purchase price of a SR facility or land over the 4-year SR Program period. This policy will assist counties in their efforts to develop facilities for School Readiness Programs and related strategies such as preschool and infant/toddler programs. (5/20/03)

USE OF CCFC SR FUNDS & LIMITATIONS

9. Q: Are there restrictions on the use of First 5 CCFC Funds for SR Programs and other local projects?

A: Yes, there are restrictions on the use of First 5 CCFC funds for fixed or capital assets and for capital improvements. Please review recent Fiscal Memos No. 01-04 and No. 01-06, also available on the First 5 CCFC website www.ccfc.ca.gov - under *Annual Reports and Fiscal Issues*. (7/24/02)

10. Q: What ages are covered by the First 5 School Readiness Initiative matching funds?

A: The First 5 School Readiness Initiative Matching Funds can be used to provide services covering all five "Essential and Coordinated Elements" to children 0 (prenatal) to 5 (up to the sixth birthday).

The intent of the First 5 School Readiness funds is to assure the provision of all five "Essential and Coordinated Elements" to children before they enter kindergarten. Once the child enters kindergarten, he/she becomes a student in the school system and is eligible for all services and programs provided through the K-12 education system. Services now can be provided either by the school system directly, or through referral. (12/18/02)

11. Q: If our county commission had established an allocation plan for the SR matching funds based on the high-priority schools in the county and one of the school districts chooses not to participate, may we reallocate the funds to other high-priority schools?

A: Yes, the County Commission may reallocate SR Matching funds between high-priority schools/communities during the annual budget request process. On an annual basis or more frequently if needed, County Commissions have an opportunity to revise the SR Program work plans/strategies and budgets for all approved programs. (5/20/03)

5 ESSENTIAL & COORDINATED ELEMENTS

12. Q: What criteria would meet the 5 “Essential and Coordinated Elements”? What minimum service levels would be necessary?

The 5 “Essential and Coordinated Elements” chart shown in the *Index* provides samples/examples of criteria and minimum service levels for the 5 “Essential and Coordinated Elements.” A substantial amount of work will be needed to fully develop the criteria for each ‘Element’ for the SR Programs. First 5 CCFC will develop this information with the SR Work

Group and partners. Additional research-based information, tools, and resources will be provided through technical assistance. (5/30/01)

13. Q: How will the Pre-K Guidelines that the California Department of Education (CDE) is currently implementing fit into the criteria for the ‘Essential Elements’?

A: The new CDE Pre-K Guidelines will be reviewed and considered as criteria for the ‘early care and education essential element’ for appropriate service delivery settings. The Guidelines are an excellent resource for program planning. (8/30/01)

14. Q: How will the need for using strategies based on research be balanced with ‘new ideas’ proposed by community groups/members?

A: The First 5 CCFC, County Commissions, and other partners will work together to summarize what we know about ‘what works’ and ‘promising practices’ in the 5 “Essential and Coordinated Elements” for the SR Programs. It was agreed that this represents a substantial amount of work. Generally, what we know is based on research on discrete program elements and not the combination of programs/strategies proposed for the SR Programs. We will ask communities to check available research and provide a strong link to research-based practices when innovative ideas are proposed. (5/30/01)

15. Q: How do the School Readiness Programs complement the Family Resource Centers that some County Commissions have developed and/or funded?

A: Family Resource Centers may be less focused on ‘school readiness’ than the proposed SR Programs, yet are possible foundations for the SR Programs and are based on the same principles of collaboration and local decision-making. (5/30/01)

16. Q: One of the five “Essential and Coordinated Elements” is Early Care and Education (ECE). Can you better define this element? Is it a structured program?

A: This includes strategies that focus on School Readiness goals for children such as ECE services, improved access to high quality ECE through referrals, information and outreach to parents and providers using strategies that are culturally and linguistically appropriate and address the needs of children with disabilities and special needs and improved implementation of effective practices through training for parents and all types of ECE providers (SR RFF Guidelines, page 14). (8/22/01)

17. Q: Would the ‘early care and education’ provided under the School Readiness Programs be limited to licensed care or would license-exempt types of service delivery be considered? Will there be a home-based component for school readiness?

A: The goal is to link ALL early care and education settings (licensed, license-exempt, families, informal care, family child care, etc.) to the neighborhood school sites, as well as provide services at or near schools or through outreach or mobile delivery strategies. (5/30/01)

18. Q: If we have only one school in our county in API deciles 1-3 and would like to use our school readiness funds and local match to create a countywide system, may we proceed (pertinent for County Commissions receiving baseline SR allocations)?

A: Yes. First 5 CCFC School Readiness funds can be used to create a countywide SR system that encompasses and evaluates all 5 “Essential and Coordinated Elements” for participating students as long as the targeted students/families in the eligible schools and communities receive focused interventions that provide demonstrable results. The ultimate goal of the SR Initiative is to bring SR Programs to scale so that all families, schools, and communities work together for student success. (9/12/01)

19. Q: If the identified high-priority school(s) for our county does not choose to participate in the SR matching funds initiative, may we develop SR Programs with other interested school(s)?

A: Yes, if the identified high-priority school(s) for your county does not choose to participate in the SR Matching Funds initiative, the county commission may develop SR Programs with other interested school(s) that meet the next level of eligibility (e.g., special factors) or a countywide SR Program may be implemented. Please provide documentation of the rationale regarding the decision not to include the high-priority school and for the selection of participating schools. (5/20/03)

FULLY OPERATIONAL SR PROGRAM

20. Q: What does a “fully operational” SR Program mean?

A: It is the goal of the CCFC that every SR Program will be fully operational within 12 months of the original approval date. We consider a program to be fully operational when it is providing services at the levels planned in the original SR program application, the duration and intensity of the services are such that they will be able to show improvements for children, the program can be sustained at that level for 48 months, and it includes services in all the “5 Essential and Coordinated Elements.” (5/04)

21. Q: Due to unforeseen start-up issues, it has taken longer to begin School Readiness Program operations. Do we still have to spend all School Readiness Matching Funds within 4 years?

A: After reviewing the SR fiscal forms, it appears that SR Program start-up may have taken longer than anticipated. As a result, some SR Programs may need to operate over 5 fiscal and/or program years instead of the approved 4 years. When start-up is delayed, a SR Program is allowed to operate over 5 fiscal/program years as long as the following conditions are met:

- Request for SR funds is not increased as a result of the increase in SR Program length.
- SR Program reaches and maintains the planned scope and level of SR services that can be sustained over 4 program years (48 months) within the SR Matching Fund allocation.
- SR Program is fully operational within 12 months of approval.

- County Commission provides in writing an adequate reason/justification for the program delay (SR Form 1E, due on or before October 15).

Once a SR program is fully operational, any undisbursed allocation of CCFC SR Funds for FY 04/05 will be carried forward to the 5th “program year.” A First 5 County Commission that requests to operate over 5 program years would need to provide a SR Program Budget Update (SR Form 1) and a SR Budget Narrative (SR Form 1E) explaining/justifying the program delay, including assurances that the program will be fully operational within 12 months of the original funding.

NOTE: First 5 CCFC expects that all funded SR Programs will be fully operational within 12 months of funding and will provide services across the 5 “Essential and Coordinated Elements” using approved SR funds within 5 fiscal and/or program years.

22. Q: Please provide an example to illustrate how SR funds are carried forward when the SR Program experiences late start up.

A: For example: **School Readiness Program A** was approved to receive CCFC SR funds in February 2004 (FY 03/04). Due to unforeseen contracting delays, services did not start until July 2004 (FY 04/05). FY 03/04 (February – June 2004) funds were actually spent during FY 04/05, and thus are reported as unspent when completing the FY 03/04 Expenditure Report. **School Readiness Program A** has two options:

- 1) Receive a reduced FY 04/05 disbursement (budgeted allocation minus CCFC Unspent Funds) and carry forward the undisbursed CCFC SR funds into the 5th fiscal year. The 5 months of CCFC SR funds originally budgeted in FY 03/04 would be used towards the FY 04/05 program expenses. The undisbursed allocation for FY 04/05 will not be taken away; it will be made available in the 5th FY (07/08) to ensure that the program has 4 “program years” of operation: 12 months in FY 04/05, 12 months in 05/06, 12 months in 06/07 and 12 months in 07/08; or,
- 2) Request the full disbursement for FY 04/05 by providing a budget narrative that justifies the need for the FY 04/05 budgeted allocation, as well as the need to use the unspent funds in FY 03/04. If the unspent funds have been committed and do not bump service levels to a level that cannot be maintained over the 4 “program years,” then no deduction will occur. **Remember that the 4-year SR allocation for that SR Program can never exceed the approved 4-year amount, and a program must operate for 4 “program years” (i.e., 48 months). Any service level changes must be sustained within the confines of the original First 5 CCFC SR funds budgeted. (5/04)**

23. Q: What happens if a SR Program is not “fully operational” within 12 months?

A: If a SR Program is not fully operational within 12 months, First 5 CCFC staff will be available to offer technical assistance. A plan will be developed to assist the First 5 County Commission to reach the goal of becoming fully operational. If the SR Program is unable to become fully operational within an additional and reasonable amount of time, then other actions may be considered with the First 5 County Commission. (5/04)

SR PROGRAM CHANGES & REPORTING

24. Q: What constitutes a major program change?

A: A major program change is any significant change that is made to the original scope of work as defined in the original SR RFF application. School Readiness Programs are designed as a four-year sustainable commitment to the children and families in a “school community.” One of the core requirements necessary for the approval and design of a SR Program is the completion of an extensive community assessment, using multiple sources and data. The actual program design is then based on that community assessment. Moreover, continued active involvement and decision-making by families, communities, and schools in the design, development, implementation, and evaluation over the life of the program is also a core requirement. Therefore, any change from the original program design must be in line with the assessed needs of the community that is being served, be community driven, and respond to local evaluation results.

Any questions regarding what constitutes a major program changes should be made directly to the SRPO staff prior to making the change at the local level. SRPO staff will review the request to ensure that program changes are consistent with SR Program policies and to ensure statewide consistency. If there is any doubt regarding what constitutes a major program change, please do not hesitate to call SRPO staff.

Any one of the following would be considered a major program change and a First 5 County Commission needs to inform the First 5 CCFC of these change/s **as soon as possible, prior to approving the change.** (7/04)

A major program change may include any of the following actions:

- A budget change that results in an increase/decrease in service levels;
- A fiscal agent or partner change, i.e. adding or deleting a partner(s);
- A strategy/service change (for example, a SR Program changes the ECE Home Visitation strategy to a research-based program such as PAT or HIPPY). If a service/strategy is being deleted because the service provider is not adequately performing or is no longer available, a new service provider or delivery mechanism needs to be selected to ensure a consistent and sustained level of service to the children and families in the targeted area over the four-year SR Program.
- Deletion of any schools listed on the RFF Form 1B Participating School(s) due to school closure or consolidation. Any changes to the original application needs to ensure that the population being served is the same as the population defined in the original application and that the commitment of services and levels of service is consistent with the community assessment. Therefore, deletion of a school is not allowed unless there is a school closure or consolidation by the school district **and** if the same service levels can be maintained in the school community using a different delivery method.
- Expansion of the SR Program to other eligible schools.

25. Q: What is the process for informing the First 5 CCFC of major program changes?

A: Prior to making any major program changes a County Commission needs to develop a review process at the local level. Once the County Commission has completed the local process, and prior to giving the program approval to make the change, the First 5 County Commission needs to inform the First 5 CCFC of these pending changes. CCFC staff will then review the information for consistency with statewide SR policies and inform the First 5 County Commission of the review.

As part of the review process, a First 5 County Commission needs to complete and submit the following forms for review:

- SR Program Budget Update (SR Form 1),
- Budget Narrative (SR Form 1E),
- Proposed FY 04/05 Operating Budget (SR Form 1A),
- A new SR Program Directory Information (Form 5) to include the changes mentioned above, as well as to report a change in program contact information,
- A revised work plan (scope of work) and other information may be needed to accurately reflect the revised SR Program depending on the magnitude of the changes.

Other **minor program** changes also need to be reported annually on or before October 15 in the SR Program Budget Update (SR Form 1) and a SR Budget Narrative (SR Form 1E). (7/04)

26. Q: What happens if a participating school (a school listed in the SR RFF application) decides not to participate in the SR Program?

A: Although participation in a SR Program is not mandatory, once a school has committed to participate, it is very important that the commitment to serve the children and families in the community served by the school(s) continue over the 4-year program period. Schools are a vital partner in the success of school readiness, and the role of the participating schools should be strengthened through the development of an MOU or contract that clearly defines the role and commitment of the school to serve children and families during the four-year SR Program.

If a school partner is unable to continue, and after all efforts have been made to assist the school's participation, the First 5 County Commission needs to enter into an agreement with another partner who will be able to fulfill the 4-year commitment of services made to children and families in the targeted community at the time the original SR Program application was approved. (7/04)

SR IMPLEMENTATION FUNDS

27. Q: Will the State provide for SR Implementation Funds?

A: First 5 CCFC will provide annual Implementation Funds depending on the size of a county's allocation. (See Allocation Tables on page 17 of the SR RFF, *Guidelines and Tools for*

Completing a SR Program Application.) After submitting the *Verification of Intent to Participate* form, a County Commission may request Implementation Funds at any time. The SR Implementation Funds do not require a local match and are available for each year for four years. County Commissions may request two years of their four-year SR Implementation Funds in the first year. (5/23/02)

28. Q: Can SR Implementation Funds be used for School Readiness planning, or does planning have to be in place before implementation monies can be drawn down? Can dollars be allocated to helping sites with future application periods?

A: SR Implementation Funds can be used for any part of the four-year School Readiness Initiative, including but not restricted to administrative start-up costs, staff, needs- assessment, technical assistance, training, and program costs. The submission of a completed *Verification of Intent to Participate* form is required to receive SR Implementation Funds. (5/23/02)

29. Q: When can a First 5 County Commission request SR Implementation Funds?

A: It is recommended that SR Implementation Funds be requested on an annual basis using the Annual Request for School Readiness Matching Funds and SR Implementation Funds (SR Form 1D), on or before October 15. However, SR Implementation Funds can be requested at any time, but no more than once during each fiscal year during the four-year program. An exception is made during the first year of the SR Program operation when a two-year allocation can be requested. SR Implementation Funds are a fixed allocation, and a First 5 County Commission cannot receive more than the 4-year allocation. (5/04)

30. Q: Does the county's strategic plan need to be revised to reference this SR Initiative? If so, can SR Implementation Funds be used for that purpose?

A: It depends, as some strategic plans have a sufficiently broad scope that they do not need to be revised. SR Implementation Funds can be used to support operations (planning, development, and implementation efforts) or for program funding needed to establish and operate a viable School Readiness Program. (8/22/01)

31. Q: How should SR Implementation Funds be reported?

A: SR Implementation Funds should be reported in the annual fiscal audit with all other County Commission revenues. SR Implementation Funds should also be reported in the Annual Request for SR Implementation Funds (SR Form 1D).

NOTE: SR Implementation Funds or any other First 5 State Commission project funds included in a First 5 County Commission SR Program's funding **CANNOT** be used as cash match for State Commission funds. (5/04)

SECTION 2: FISCAL REQUIREMENTS

SR FISCAL TOOLS & GUIDELINES

32. Q: What "tools" does a First 5 County Commission need to complete the SR fiscal forms?

A: The First 5 County Commission needs to have the following "tools" gathered before completing the SR fiscal forms. These "tools" will assist the county in completing the SR fiscal forms. (7/04)

- 1) SR Initiative Request for Funding (RFF)
- 2) Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs), Consolidated Version, July 2004
- 3) Approved SR Program application
- 4) Latest approved SR Program Budget Form 4A (the one on file at First 5 CCFC)
- 5) Current SR fiscal forms (all due on or before October 15) and SR fiscal form instructions
- 6) Most recent First 5 County Commission Annual Audit Report
- 7) The disbursement letter received by your County Commission after your SR Program application was approved

NOTE: The most recent version of the SR Forms for FY 04/-05 and the instructions for filling out these forms are posted on our website, www.cfc.ca.gov.

33. Q: Where does one access the list of CCFC Fiscal Memoranda and Audit Guidelines?

A: CCFC Fiscal Memoranda and the Audit Guidelines can be accessed from the following website: www.cfc.ca.gov - under- School Readiness/Preschool for All, Annual Reports & Fiscal Issues. (7/04)

Included in this site are:

- Fiscal Memo 01-06: Use of CCFC Funds for Fixed or Capital Assets and for Capital Improvements, and
- Attorney General's Opinion on Supplementation vs. Supplantation

FISCAL REPORTING

REQUEST FOR SR FUNDS—REVISED PROCESS

34. Q: Will the process for requesting First 5 CCFC SR funds for FY 04/05 be the same as it was last year (FY 03/04)?

A: NO. The process and forms that were used last year to request FY 03/04 funding (Forms 1A, 1B, 1C, 1D and 2A) are different. Last year was the first time that SR Programs were asked to submit fiscal and expenditure reports. Through this process, we learned the issues and trends facing County Commissions and have improved the SR reporting process. The new process will be as follows:

On or after July 1 of each year, First 5 County Commissions will receive 50% of the CCFC SR funds based on the latest approved SR Budget Form 4A for each approved SR Program in the First 5 CCFC file. The disbursement is automatic (provided that all SR fiscal reporting requirements for the previous FY have been submitted and approved). First 5 County Commissions will receive SR Program funds within 4-6 weeks after July 1, and do not have to submit additional forms to receive the first disbursement of SR funds. (5/04)

CASH MATCH

35. Q: When a First 5 County Commission certifies local cash match, is the cash match based on the amount of local funds received during the fiscal year or on the amount of local funds that were spent?

A: Annually, every SR Program is required to certify at a minimum a \$1: \$1 local cash match for State CCFC SR Matching Funds based on the amount of local funds that were spent during the previous fiscal year. A First 5 County Commission certifies annually that for every dollar of local match that was spent, one dollar of First 5 CCFC SR funds was also spent. The premise behind the “SR Matching Funds” is that the State CCFC dollar matches the local dollar (i.e., “matches” the local expenditure). Please note that additional local cash match (please include in the fiscal reports) and in-kind resource expenditures (do not include) over the minimum are encouraged. (5/04)

EXPENDITURE

36. Q: When do First 5 County Commissions need to report program expenditures?

A: By October 15 of each year, First 5 County Commissions will be required to report actual expenditures (the same as those reported in your local County Commission annual audit) for the previous fiscal year from all funding sources, including First CCFC SR funds and county and/or local partner cash match (in-kind contributions are not included). If all First 5 CCFC SR funds have been expended (no unspent funds from prior FY), and the First 5 County Commission certifies the appropriate level of cash match, the remaining 50% of funds will be disbursed. New and revised fiscal reporting forms have been developed for FY 03/04. (5/04)

37. Q: The expenditures reported in our local annual audit are expected to match the SR Expenditure Report Form 2A that is due in October. We estimate accruals in late June for the local audit and may not receive actual invoices until after the end of the FY. Our estimates in the local audit may differ by a few dollars from the SR Expenditure Report. This may result in a discrepancy between the audit and the information on the SR Expenditure Report (Form 2A). How do we explain this difference?

A: To be consistent with the FY 03/04 audit requirements, expenditures should reflect all the services that were performed during FY 03/04. We also realize that the figures from the audit and those reported on the SR Expenditure Report Form 2A may not be exactly the same. If the accrual estimates in your county local audit differ from the actual expenditures listed on the SR

Expenditure Report (Form 2A), please add a brief explanation for this difference on the bottom of SR Form 2A.

UNSPENT SR FUNDS & “CARRY FORWARD” FUNDS

38. Q: What happens to SR Program Unspent Funds?

A: Once a SR Program is fully operational, any unspent First 5 CCFC SR funds from the previous fiscal year will be used for part or all of the second disbursement, and the second disbursement will be revised accordingly. The balance of the remaining disbursement for that year will be carried forward to the 5th FY of operation. Exceptions will be made on a case-by-case basis when appropriate justification is provided demonstrating the need to use the unspent funds plus a full year’s budgeted allocation. For example:

School Readiness Program A is scheduled to receive \$100,000 in CCFC SR funds for FY 04/05.

On July 1, \$50,000 (50% of total FY 04/05 disbursement) will be automatically disbursed.

By October 15, County Commission A submits all required SR fiscal reporting forms including an expenditure report that shows unspent CCFC funds in the amount of **\$25,000**.

Based on the newly clarified policy, School Readiness Program A will receive a second disbursement of funds in the amount of \$25,000, unless the County Commission provides a justification and budget narrative demonstrating the need for the budgeted allocation plus the unspent funds. The second disbursement of **\$25,000** is calculated as follows:

\$100,000	Total budgeted allocation for FY 04/05
- \$50,000	50% of total budgeted allocation sent automatically in July
\$50,000	Balance of CCFC funds for FY 04/05
- \$25,000	CCFC SR Unspent Funds from prior FY reported in October
\$25,000	Second disbursement in October = Remaining 50% of CCFC SR funds minus the unspent funds. The remaining FY 04/05 CCFC SR Program disbursement of \$25,000 will be carried forward to the 5 th fiscal/program year. (5/04)

39. Q: Why are the Unspent CCFC SR Funds being carried forward to a 5th SR “program year”?

A: The First 5 CCFC needs to understand the start-up and expenditure patterns for all First 5 County SR Programs to ensure that First 5 CCFC SR funds are available when needed to continue effective SR Programs. Therefore, any unspent funds from the prior fiscal year will be reduced from the second disbursement to assist First 5 County Commissions with keeping the SR Programs within manageable and sustainable levels, avoiding a level of funding that cannot

be supported and sustained in the 4-year SR Program design. The undisbursed allocation for the new fiscal year will not be taken away. Instead, this will be carried forward into the 5th fiscal year of operation. There may be situations in which there is a need to use the prior year's unspent funds (in addition to the request for a full disbursement for the current year's allocation), and this may be possible as long as there is sufficient justification provided on the Budget Narrative (SR Form 1E). (5/04)

40. Q: Can a First 5 County Commission use the unspent funds to add new schools (increase service levels) because the cost of the SR program is less than originally anticipated?

A. SR Funds may be used to expand services to the high priority schools as long as the children and families that are currently being served are provided with a continuous and effective level of service as originally described in the SR application. It is also important to note that the 4-year level of funding (amount approved in SR application) will remain the same. The increase in service level is welcomed as long as there is no increase in the CCFC SR level of funding. A First 5 County Commission requesting to do this should also submit the following: (5/04)

- 1) List of Participating Schools (SR RFF Form 1B),
- 2) Revised SR Program Directory Information (Form 5),
- 3) Revised Work Plan,
- 4) Proposed FY 04/05 Operating Budget (SR Form 1A),
- 5) SR Program Budget Update (SR Form 1),
- 6) SR Budget Narrative (SR Form 1E)

41. Q: How and when does a First 5 County Commission explain why CCFC SR Funds were not spent during the prior FY?

A: If a First 5 County Commission is requesting to use First 5 CCFC SR programs funds that were not expended in the prior fiscal year as well as receive a full year's CCFC SR allocation, the First 5 County Commission needs to submit the following:

- 1) Revised SR Program Directory Information (Form 5),
- 2) Revised Work Plan,
- 3) Proposed FY 04/05 Operating Budget (SR Form 1A),
- 4) SR Program Budget Update (SR Form 1),
- 5) SR Budget Narrative (SR Form 1E) (5/04).

If the First 5 County Commission does not want/need to use the unspent funds from the prior FY and is requesting a reduced amount of CCFC SR funds for FY 04/05, the First 5 County Commission needs to provide CCFC staff on or before October 15 with a short narrative explaining the reason why there are unspent funds from the previous year and the effects this had on the program, including level of service, number of children and families served, etc. (5/04)

SECTION 3: TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE (TA) & EVALUATION

42. Q: How does one get technical assistance and what is available?

A: There are multiple levels of TA available to SR Programs:

- Regional TA is designed to fit the needs of First 5 County Programs as delineated by six regions: Northwest, Northeast, Sacramento, Bay Area, Central, and South. For more information on Regional TA and contacts, please visit the First 5 Association's website, www.ccafa.org (this will soon change).
- First 5 Contractor Training and TA are available statewide and are being coordinated through the Regional TA system. Examples of First Contractor training and TA are: Child Development Permit and CRI Training and TA, Statewide Data Collection and Evaluation, Quality Asthma Care for health care providers, Safe from the Start, and Oral Health.
- Relevant training and TA are also offered through partners, e.g., AmeriCorps, Family Support Public Private Funders Group, Departments of Health/Education/Social Services Foundations.
- TA is also available at associated websites, e.g., www.ccfc.ca.gov and www.healthychild.ucla.edu/first5careadiness.

43. Q: What is the current status of the Evaluation component of the School Readiness Initiative?

A: The School Readiness Initiative Evaluation is embedded within the overall statewide evaluation of First 5 California. The SR evaluation design is a combination of several approaches that are being used to collect data about children and families served, the programs and schools serving them, and promising approaches/models. Using both quantitative and qualitative methods, the evaluation builds on the growing knowledge base about school readiness, and has received input and review from key stakeholders at the State and local levels. Additional information can be accessed on the First 5 California evaluation web site at: www.first5eval.com

SECTION 4: SR INITIATIVE (HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE)

PARTICIPATION & ELIGIBILITY

44. Q: Do counties have to participate in the SR Initiative?

A: No. This is a totally voluntary program that County Commissions and their local partners apply for through an RFF process; quality criteria and fiscal requirements need to be met. Any allocated funds not issued to eligible counties will be taken back to First 5 CCFC for approval to spend on this initiative or for other priority areas.

To assist First 5 CCFC with determining the extent of County Commission participation, County Commissions needed to provide *Verification of Intent to Participate* by 12/01 and to indicate the amount of First 5 CCFC School Readiness Matching Funds they plan to use by 5/15/02. Since the remaining 13 rural/small counties have now been approved to participate, they will need to provide the following forms to the First 5 CCFC by September 30, 2002: 1. *Verification of Intent to Participate Form*, 2. *Estimated Allocation Plan Form*, and 3. *Request for Implementation Funds*. A county must submit the *Verification of Intent to Participate Form* prior to receiving SR Implementation Funds. (5/29/02)

45. Q: Which school/communities would be prioritized for School Readiness Programs?

A: The School Readiness Initiative targets high priority school communities that had API scores in deciles 1-3 (1999/2000). API scores are now available for schools with 11 or more valid STAR scores. We estimate that approximately 780,000 children would be prioritized for School Readiness Programs in communities that have schools with APIs 1-3 (1999/2000). This corresponds to 1,352 schools in 45 counties. The communities in these school attendance areas have large numbers of low-income children and families, with a high percentage of Hispanic and other ethnic groups. In addition to these targeted ‘service sites,’ County Commissions could include a limited number of ‘teaching center’ schools that have similar demographics (students and families served) and have demonstrated positive academic results.

Approximately 20% of State First 5 CCFC funds could be used for these school communities or for schools participating in the Immediate Intervention/Underperforming Schools Program or Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration (i.e., schools with API scores in deciles 4-5) if the county chooses (SR RFF, *Guidelines and Tools for Completing a SR Program Application*, page 16.)

The priorities for the SR Program Matching Funds for the additional 13 rural/small counties effective May 16, 2002 are: 1. High priority schools as identified in the SR RFF (SR *Guidelines*, page 15) which for these purposes, include schools in the deciles 1-5 of the 1999/2000 API, then 2. The school does not qualify with the criteria listed above, but demonstrates special factors that warrant consideration. The special factors that warrant consideration reflecting the ‘school readiness’ related needs of children 0-5 and their families should be described in the application. These 13 counties are: Alpine, Sierra, Modoc, Trinity, Mono, Mariposa, Plumas, Amador, Del Norte, Calaveras, Tuolumne, Tehama, and Nevada. (7/1/02)

46. Q: How can the County Commission and Local Partners determine which are the “high priority schools” in the County (Deciles 1 through 3 in the API)?

A: Charts that list the ‘high priority’ schools in each county are listed on the First 5 CCFC School Readiness website (<http://www.ccfc.ca.gov/SchoolReady.htm>). In addition, information on the API for California public schools is available at the California Department of Education (CDE) website (<http://www.cde.ca.gov>), under “API – Academic Performance Index and includes API Base Reports.” The following are available:

- Detailed Instructions for Accessing Reports,
- County List of Schools,
- District List of Schools,

- School Level Reports, and
- Explanatory Notes that include information about the data contained in the API reports.

Information about the STAR 2000 which includes the Stanford 9 (SAT 9) is also included on the CDE website (5/30/01)

47. Q: What are the eligibility criteria for the school/communities to be served by the 13 County Commissions approved for School Readiness Initiative Matching Funds on May 15, 2002?

A: The eligibility criteria for the new 13 counties were described in a July 2, 2002 memo. In this memo the eligibility criteria were defined as follows: First Priority school/communities are "High priority schools," and for these 13 counties include schools in deciles 1-5 on the 1999/2000 API (Academic Performance Index).

After these school/communities are served, then school/communities that meet the second priority may be included. Second Priority: The school does not qualify using the criteria listed above, but demonstrates "special factors" that warrant consideration. The "special factors" to be considered must reflect school readiness related needs for children 0-5 and their families and must be described in the application.

If a county does not have schools with API's 1-5, then only "special factor" schools will be included in the application. If a county has a school or schools with API's 1-5, the application must include plans that assure this/these school(s) have an opportunity to participate before considering other schools.

Note: The eligibility criteria as defined on page 15 of the School Readiness RFF apply to the original 45 counties that were eligible for SR Matching Funds based on schools with an API of 1 - 3 in 1999/2000. (12/18/02)

48. Q: If API Ratings change, will the dollars be reallocated?

A: No. County Commission's allocation of School Readiness funds for this four-year program will not change regardless of shifts in the API scores for schools. (5/23/02)

49. Q: Who are the essential partners at the local level? Are essential partners involved already, or what needs to happen to generate participation?

A: Schools, plus their district (and county office of education where appropriate), are essential and required partners in local SR Programs. Families were agreed to be required partners, with active engagement, advisory, and participation processes. The language and culture of the community/neighborhood needs to be reflected by the 'partners.' In addition, at a minimum, it was advised that at least one partner be included for each of the 5 'Essential and Coordinated Elements' of the SR Programs (i.e., school districts or county office of education for the 'schools' readiness for children' element). It was also recommended that a plan be developed for active outreach for the early care and education community (e.g., Child Care Planning Council, Child Care Association, Resource and Referral Agencies, informal care and family care). (5/30/01)

50. Q: Is the education system a mandated partner of School Readiness?

A: Yes. SR Programs Matching Funds are offered to coordinate, develop, implement and sustain a system of collaborative school-based or school-linked services, programs, and informal supports based on research or promising practices to improve “school readiness” for children, families, communities, and schools. (8/22/01)

51. Q: Within the Latino community and other communities of color, spiritual development is intrinsically intertwined with all other aspects of development. How will this be addressed?

A: First 5 CCFC encourages CBOs and faith-based organizations to participate as important contributors to School Readiness. Faith-based organizations may be key to many communities by providing different types of support and information for parents/families. Their involvement is important to SR success and may be part of a culturally and linguistically appropriate strategy. Please be aware that under certain circumstances, the State constitution may prohibit the expenditure of State funds for specific purposes. (8/22/01)

52. Q: Can the first allocations for matching funds be used only to support approved School Readiness Program? Can this money be used to support potential sites?

A: Funds awarded to support approved School Readiness Programs are expected to be used to support the programs outlined in the application that meet the required criteria. They will not be awarded to support potential sites/programs. Implementation Funds are intended to be used for that purpose. (5/23/02)

53. Q: Would higher priority be given to building on an existing infrastructure (e.g., Family Resource Center or Healthy Start) or for starting in communities without any infrastructure?

A: The first funding cycle in 2001/2002 included “ready” sites, with a strong infrastructure and ability to implement the five “Essential and Coordinated Elements” immediately upon funding. For the 2002/2003 funding cycle, the First 5 CCFC has been advised that prioritizing for building on existing infrastructure or starting in communities without available infrastructure needs to be done at the county level. Various factors such as where schools are located and earlier success with using different infrastructure organizations and facilities need to be considered in developing SR Programs that can provide all 5 “Essential and Coordinated Elements.” TA such as mapping demographic data and resources (existing sites for medical and social service providers, Even Start, Healthy Start, Early Head Start/Head Start, State preschools, etc.) has been developed to help County Commissions. Please see the First 5 CCFC website located at the following Internet address: <http://www.ccfc.ca.gov>. (5/30/02)

54. Q: What are the key threshold questions that need to be addressed during the County Commission’s development and review process for SR Programs before FIRST 5 CCFC is able to approve SR funds for the County Commission’s SR Programs?

A: The threshold questions that need to be addressed for all School Readiness Programs during the County Commission's development and review process are:

- 1) Do the proposed new/expanded strategies address the assessed community needs, including prioritized needs and service strategies identified by families? Are the services appropriate for the population being served?
- 2) What are the expected outcomes for the program? How will the new/expanded program services better prepare children for school? How will you track those improvements?
- 3) Does the School Readiness Program provide for services in all 5 Essential and Coordinated Elements?
- 4) Do the new/expanded services and program serve **only** children 0-5? If not, please specify additional funding streams and partners that provide services to children older than five.
- 5) Does the School Readiness Program demonstrate cost-effective and cost-appropriate use of Prop 10 funds? Does the budget narrative explain the connection between the SR Program and the costs? Are assurances provided that supplantation would not occur?
- 6) Has the program considered other potential funding streams to pay for direct services? Is the explanation clearly presented?
- 7) What percentage of the funds being spent is in the administrative area? How is the expenditure of funds for administrative purposes related to providing new or expanded services to children 0-5? Please justify the need for all administrative expenses.
(7/22/02)

FUNDING & ALLOCATION

55. Q: How much funding has the First 5 CCFC approved for the School Readiness Initiative?

A: At the July 19, 2001 meeting, First 5 CCFC approved \$200 million over four years for this initiative. The School Readiness Program funding total is now \$206,500,000. Initially, the 45 counties with low performing schools in API deciles 1-3 (1999/2000) were eligible to receive School Readiness Implementation Funds and Matching Funds. On May 16, 2002 the State Commission approved School Readiness funding for the remaining 13 counties that did not have schools in API deciles 1-3 (1999/2000).

All 58 counties are now eligible to participate in the School Readiness Initiative and to apply for and receive, SR Matching Funds and SR Implementation Funds. All counties have always been eligible to participate in technical assistance and will be part of the evaluation and research processes. (7/2/02)

56. Q: How are County Commission allocations established?

A: County Commissions are eligible to receive funds based on an allocation methodology agreed to by First 5 CCFC and the CCAFA that combines the number of births in a county with the number of students in schools performing at the API deciles 1-3 (1999/2000 API).

First 5 CCFC provides a base allocation of School Readiness funds for 27 counties including the 13 additional counties (Alpine, Sierra, Modoc, Trinity, Mono, Mariposa, Plumas, Amador, Del Norte, Calaveras, Tuolumne, Tehama, and Nevada) effective May 16, 2002 which is a \$100,000 annual SR Matching Fund allocation and a \$25,000 annual Implementation Fund allocation for these counties. (5/23/02)

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1. 5 ESSENTIALS & COORDINATED ELEMENTS (CHART)

This chart demonstrates the preliminary service and criteria levels for 5 “Essential and Coordinated Elements” intended to be used as guidance and technical assistance to assist with developing and implementing strategies for the 5 “Essential and Coordinated Elements.” The strategies at each SR Program need to improve the quality and integration of current service systems while exemplifying the following principles:

- Voluntary family participation
- Family focus and decision-making
- Community investment and design
- Inclusive, culturally/linguistically competent
- Addresses needs of children with disabilities and other special needs
- Collaboration
- Builds on family and community assets
- Coordinates existing services and infrastructure

5 Essential and Coordinated Elements	IF these Service Levels are provided,	THEN use these Criteria for guidance
Early Care and Education	1) Improved access to quality early childhood education and care (center and home based) appropriate to family needs 2) Provide cross-training and child development info/resources for families and early care/education providers working with	1) HHSA Early Head Start and Head Start Program Standards or State Preschool PreK Guidelines (for center based care) or R&R El Comienzo guidance (for family day care homes) 2) Participate in CARES or other effective training,

	<p>children 0-5 in school attendance area</p> <p>3) Improve quality of early childhood education providers</p> <p>4) Provide a multifaceted parent program including parent participation in parent resource center activities with other parents, parent volunteers in classroom, attending school events and field trips, etc.</p>	<p>recruitment, and retention program</p> <p>3) Adapt and implement Parent as Teachers (PAT) Chicago Child Parent Centers (CPC), Head Start, or similar parent involvement and early childhood education program.</p>
Parenting/Family Support	<p>1) Research-based home visitation program that includes ‘school readiness’ in goals.</p> <p>2) Adult education programs that address family interests and needs as determined through community assessment</p> <p>3) Parent/family leadership development strategies</p>	<p>1a) Home visitation strategy appropriate to population served and service goals.</p> <p>1b) Linked to services through Family Resource Centers, Healthy Start sites, etc.</p> <p>1c) On-going staff development and supervision</p> <p>2a) Adult education programs through recognized providers such as school districts and community colleges</p> <p>2b) Provide family literacy, high school completion, and English As A Second Language programs</p>
Health and Social Services	<p>1) Provision or referral and follow-up to basic health care, including prenatal care, mental health counseling, nutrition services, drug and alcohol counseling, and</p>	<p>1) Access to prenatal and pediatric care – so every child has a medical and dental home</p> <p>2) Access to enrollment in</p>

	<p>‘family service plan’ as needed</p> <p>2) Expand health insurance enrollment for all children and families, including those who are uninsured and underinsured</p> <p>3) Provide early screening for children’s health and developmental problems and coordinate early intervention services for children with disabilities</p> <p>4) Provide cross-training and child development info/resources for providers working in child and family services such as health, mental health, refugee/immigrant services, faith communities, criminal justice/probation, alcohol and drug prevention and treatment, etc.</p>	<p>Healthy Families, MediCal, and other available health insurance</p>
School Capacity/Readiness	<p>1) Communicate kindergarten and early elementary standards with families, community agencies, early education and care providers (center and home)</p> <p>2) Provide cross-training and child development info/resources for early elementary teachers, staff, and administrators</p> <p>3) Coordinate early screening for children’s health and developmental problems and early intervention services for children with disabilities</p>	<p>1) Educating parents, teachers, and providers on PreK and K standards and Guidelines</p>

	<p>4) Provide outreach and kindergarten transition for parents of children 0-5, including family involvement and leadership development</p> <p>5) Continue 'wrap around' services for children through grade 3</p>	
Site Infrastructure and Administration	<p>1) School based or linked services</p> <p>2) Provide for facility (purchase and set-up only if necessary)</p> <p>3) Site/district/county coordination</p> <p>4) Clerical support</p> <p>5) Training and development for staff and volunteers</p> <p>6) Evaluation/Research Find out what strategies and programs are effective; Implement them in ways that make sense at the local level; Make sure they are working well for our children and families from diverse backgrounds</p>	

2: FIRST 5 CCFC CONTACT PERSONS

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